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Saudi Arabia In Focus

May 26, 2009

WAR ON TERRORISM

Prince Nayef denounces deviant ideologies

The First National Conference on Intellectual Security, which concluded May 20 in Riyadh, issued a final communiqué stressing the importance of moderation, tolerance, cross-cultural dialogue, non-violence and the establishment of national strategies for promoting those values. The declaration affirmed the moderate nature of Islam and warned against embracing deviant ideologies.

The conference was organized by Second Deputy Prime Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz. At a press conference, Prince Nayef explained that the purpose of the forum was to counter the "intellectual abnormality" that is "the main reason for terrorism." He expressed hope that Saudi members of deviant groups abroad would renounce their beliefs and return home, noting, "The country is ready to welcome its citizens if they decide to opt for the correct path." He remarked, "I do not think that we have any honor as Saudis to find our sons abroad turning into bombers who kill innocent men, women and children that are not guilty of anything anywhere, whether in Iraq, Pakistan and Lebanon or anywhere else. These individuals make bombing as their profession. This is a dishonorable act and a great sin."

ENERGY

Oil minister attends Rome conference on energy and climate change

Saudi Arabia participated in the conference of energy ministers from the Group of Eight (G-8), which concluded on May 25. Speaking at the conference in Rome on May 24, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Ali Al-Naimi reiterated Saudi Arabia's determination to work towards a future of clean, abundant energy supplies. "Saudi Arabia shares the global concern regarding potential climate change and will do its part in mitigating and adapting to it," he said, noting that the Kingdom is a party to the Climate Change Convention and its Kyoto Protocol.

Minister Al-Naimi insisted that a comprehensive solution to climate change must include four key pillars: a fair distribution of the emissions-reduction burden, taking into account

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the needs of developing countries; recognition that fossil fuels will continue to dominate the energy mix for decades; equal research and development for all energy sources, including oil and gas; and the use of carbon capture and storage technologies on a global scale.

Minister Al-Naimi stressed that the Kingdom's energy investment policies are characterized by far-sightedness and are not affected by temporary market turbulence. However, he warned that long-term market volatility can undermine global energy security. In order to combat this uncertainty, he said, "Consuming and producing countries need to intensify the efforts to better understand the workings of oil markets and to improve their transparency."

SAUDI-US RELATIONS

U.S. congressional aides tour Kingdom

Human Rights Commission Chairman Dr. Bandar Al-Eiban received in Riyadh on May 24 a delegation of senior U.S. Congressional aides touring the Kingdom. Dr. Al-Eiban told the delegation that the Commission welcomes such visits, which provide a first-hand perspective of conditions in Saudi Arabia. The members of the delegation, who have visited the Kingdom twice before, commented that their experiences have helped to dispel their misconceptions about Saudi Arabia. The Congressional aides also met with Shoura Council Vice-Chairman Dr. Bandar Hajjar to discuss Saudi-U.S. parliamentary cooperation.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi campaign provides \$6 million for tsunami victims

The Saudi Charitable Campaign for the Relief of the Victims of the Tsunami in East Asia has given \$3.1 million to the International Organization of Migration (IOM). In addition, the Campaign has provided \$2.94 million for the construction of 63 housing units in the Maldives. Saudi Arabia has made extensive contributions towards alleviating the suffering of the people and countries in the southern part of Asia afflicted by the December 2004 earthquake and tsunami.

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Saudi Arabia In Focus
June 23, 2009

SAUDI ARABIA

4th anniversary of King Abdullah's ascension celebrated

Saudi Arabia celebrated the 4th anniversary of King Abdullah's ascension to the throne June 19, according to the lunar Islamic calendar. In a statement, Chairman of the Allegiance-Pledge Commission Prince Misha'al bin Abdulaziz commended the major reform efforts led by King Abdullah in the political, economic, educational and social fields. "The Kingdom is no longer today an oil country affecting the world economy only, but it is a state that contributes to making decisions regionally and internationally," he said. He pointed to President Barack Obama's decision to begin his tour of the Arab world in Saudi Arabia as an indication of "the Kingdom's position and the extent of the influence of its leader . . . in making the future of the region and the world."

Saudi citizen surrenders to security authorities

The Ministry of Interior reported Monday that a Saudi citizen connected to a deviant group abroad turned himself in to authorities in the Kingdom on June 19. His surrender was facilitated by family members, whom he called asking for help in returning to Saudi Arabia. A spokesman for the Interior Ministry said that the citizen's decision to surrender voluntarily will be taken into account when deciding his fate. The spokesman renewed the Ministry of Interior's call for all those involved in extremist activities to surrender and take advantage of the opportunity for leniency.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

King Abdullah welcomes Palestinian President

King Abdullah received President of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas at Al-Salam Palace in Jeddah on June 21. During their meeting, they discussed bilateral relations and regional developments. In particular, King Abdullah and President Abbas focused on the ongoing efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace settlement with Israel that guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The meeting was also attended by Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erekat.

Saudi Arabia calls for Mideast nuclear weapons-free zone

Saudi Arabia reiterated its call for a nuclear weapons-free Middle East during a meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in the Netherlands June 16. Nayef

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Al-Sudeiry, an official at the Saudi Embassy in The Hague, asserted that security and stability are not achieved through the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction, but through cooperation, consultation and international development. He said the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel constitutes a basic obstacle to bringing security to the region and called for an international agreement that will guarantee the safety of countries that do not acquire nuclear weapons.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S.

Ambassador Al-Jubeir addresses Foreign Service Institute

Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel A. Al-Jubeir highlighted Saudi-U.S. bilateral relations during an address in Washington June 16. Speaking to foreign service officers at the U.S. Department of State's Foreign Service Institute, Ambassador Al-Jubeir reviewed the history of cooperation between the Kingdom and the United States in a variety of spheres.

FOREIGN AID

Minister of Health separates Moroccan conjoined twins

The surgical separation of Moroccan conjoined twins was successfully completed June 20 at the King Abdulaziz Medical City of the National Guard. The operation, funded personally by King Abdullah, was performed by a Saudi specialist medical team led by Minister of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Rabecah. Following the 13-hour surgery, the twins, Azizah and Saeedah, were reported in stable condition.

\$3 million delivered by Saudi campaign for natural disaster victims

The Saudi Charitable Campaign for the Relief of the Victims of the Earthquake and Tsunami in East Asia has delivered \$3 million to the Islamic Development Bank. The money is the final installment payment for the construction of two orphanages in Indonesia's Aceh region. The funds will also be used to cover the operating costs of the facilities for three years.

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SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE OF
THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA IN WASHINGTON, DC



JULY 7, 2009

ARAB WORLD

King Abdullah holds tripartite summit with leaders of Egypt, Bahrain

King Abdullah traveled to Sharm el-Sheikh on June 30 for a one-day visit to Egypt, during which he held talks with President Hosni Mubarak. Upon the King's arrival, he met with the Egyptian leader at the Sharm el-Sheikh Conference Center. The main topic of discussion was the Mideast peace process and, specifically, Egyptian efforts to facilitate reconciliation between Palestinian factions. Later, King Abdullah and President Mubarak held a tripartite summit with Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifah. During their meeting, they reviewed regional and international issues, especially Palestinian reconciliation efforts, and discussed ways to boost cooperation between their countries.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S.

Embassy hosts Saudi exchange students

The Saudi Embassy hosted a luncheon on July 2 for a group of Saudi students participating in the Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES). The students described their experiences in the U.S. to Ambassador Adel A. Al-Jubeir, who encouraged more students to participate in such exchange programs.

YES brings students between the ages of 15 and 18 to the U.S., where they live with an American family while attending a semester or a full year of high school. The program is managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Cultural Mission organizes student exhibition, graduation ceremony

Saudi Minister of Higher Education Dr. Khalid Al-Anqari opened in Washington, D.C. on July 3 a Cultural Exhibition organized by the Saudi Embassy. The event highlighted the activities of Saudi students on scholarship at U.S. institutes. Dr. Al-Anqari was accompanied to the exhibition by Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel A. Al-Jubeir and Saudi Cultural Attaché Dr. Mohammed Al-Issa.

On July 4, the Minister of Higher Education attended a ceremony for 1,072 graduating Saudi students, all of whom are participants in the Program of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for Foreign

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Scholarships. The event, organized by the Saudi Embassy's Cultural Department, was also attended by Ambassador Al-Jubeir.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Al-Anqari noted that in 2009 more than 60,000 Saudis were studying abroad on scholarships. A total of 18,700 students were pursuing their education in the U.S., including 4,200 female students. Before the inception of King Abdullah's program four years ago, the number of Saudi students studying abroad on scholarships was only 5,000. After the public remarks, Dr. Al-Anqari and Ambassador Al-Jubeir laid the foundation stone for the new headquarters of the Cultural Department in Washington, D.C.

Saudi-U.S. trade grew 14% last year

The signing of new trade agreements by Saudi Arabia and the United States resulted in a 14 percent growth in bilateral trade between the two countries in the last year, according to a June 30 Arab News report. The total volume of Saudi-U.S. trade last year was valued at \$53.35 billion, according to Mazin Battarjee, the Deputy Chairman of the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI). Officials in both countries plan to further boost economic ties by facilitating the exchange of Saudi and U.S. business delegations.

During a June 29 meeting between members of an American delegation and JCCI officials, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Richard Erdman announced that the U.S. Embassy in the Kingdom "is working on entry visas [for] Saudi businessmen and businesswomen, in addition to expanding the training program for Saudi students in the U.S." Erdman stressed the importance of removing the barriers preventing the strengthening of bilateral economic relations – particularly between Saudi and American businesswomen.

During its tour, the U.S. delegation visited the Khadijah bint Khuwailid Center, a subsidiary of the JCCI that specializes in promoting the business activities of Saudi women. Battarjee, who met with the delegation, stressed the important role played by the Center in finding employment for women, noting that there are 3,000 female-run businesses in Jeddah.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Arabia gives Yemen \$1.2 million to fight malaria

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador in Sana'a, Ali Al-Hamdan, delivered \$1.2 million in financial aid to Yemeni Undersecretary of Health Dr. Ghazi Ismail to support anti-malaria efforts in Yemen. The assistance includes a check for \$533,464 to support a malaria control program, a shipment of medical equipment and preventative supplies worth \$666,830, and 500 swine-flu detectors.



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SAUDI EMBASSY HOSTS EXCHANGE STUDENTS

WASHINGTON [July 8, 2009] -- The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia hosted a luncheon on July 2 for a group of Saudi students participating in the Youth Exchange and Study Program (YES). Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel A. Al-Jubeir met with the students and discussed their experiences living in the U.S.

YES brings students between the ages of 15 and 18 to the U.S., where they live with an American family while attending a semester or a full year of high school. The program was created to fulfill a critical component missing in recent diplomatic relations, youth exchange programs. The goal of YES is to build cross-cultural understanding and to help build bridges of understanding between citizens of the U.S. and countries around the world. The program is managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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Saudi Arabia issues rulings in first terror trial

The Associated Press

By Donna Abu-Nasr

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia— A criminal court has issued verdicts in Saudi Arabia's first known terrorism trial for accused al-Qaida militants, the prosecution said Wednesday.

The prosecution did not say what the verdicts were or how many people were tried, but Al-Arabiya TV quoted a Justice Ministry spokesman as saying 330 people were found guilty, including one who was given a death sentence.

Saudi Arabia has pursued an aggressive campaign against militants since May 2003, when they first began attacks in the kingdom, which is bin Laden's birthplace and home to 15 of the 19 Sept. 11 hijackers. The network's attacks have targeted expatriate residential compounds, oil installations and government buildings.

The first known legal proceedings did not start until last year, however.

In a statement, a spokesman for the Bureau of Investigation and General Prosecution said an unspecified number of detainees were put on trial. He did not say when the trials began, but there have been vague reports of such trials in local media recently.

"A specialized criminal court has recently issued several preliminary verdicts in cases of defendants in al-Qaida and state security terrorism crimes," said the statement, carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The defendants can appeal.

The spokesman, whose name was not revealed, said the defendants were accused of belonging to the "deviant group," a euphemism for al-Qaida.

They were also accused of supporting and financing terrorism, going to areas of conflict to fight, and coordinating and communicating with "external parties that seek to conspire against national security by creating chaos and disrupting security, he said.

The statement said the charge sheets included "incriminating evidence of these dangerous acts and proof that every defendant has carried out the charges against him."

Interior Minister Prince Nayef announced last year that 991 suspected militants had been charged with participating in terrorist attacks over the past five years.

That announcement in October marked a significant step in the kingdom's fight against terrorism. Authorities had been reluctant to resort to trials for terrorism charges that could result in death sentences until they had shown the public that every effort had been made to give the men a chance to renounce their crimes and be rehabilitated.

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There have been no major attacks since February 2006, when suicide bombers tried but failed to attack an oil facility at the Abqaiq oil complex, the world's largest oil processing facility, in eastern Saudi Arabia.

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www.saudiembassy.net

SAUDI STUDENTS IN U.S. GRADUATE FROM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

WASHINGTON [July 7, 2009] – The Saudi Cultural Mission held a ceremony on July 4 for the second graduating class of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz scholarship program. The ceremony was attended by Saudi Minister of Higher Education, His Excellency Dr. Khalid Al-Angary and Saudi Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Adel A. Al-Jubeir.

The Saudi Scholarship Program is an opportunity for Saudi students to attend institutions of higher learning across the globe and receive a world-class education funded by the Saudi government.

The Saudi scholarship program, established by an initiative by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, has provided scholarships to 60,000 students worldwide, with about 20,000 studying in the U.S.

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**SAUDI ARABIA DENIES REPORTS REGARDING ISRAELI USE OF ITS
AIRSPACE**

WASHINGTON, [July 6, 2009] – *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia today issued the following statement in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia:*

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia totally and categorically denies accounts published by a British newspaper regarding contacts with Israel or permission to use Saudi airspace for any hostile activities. The Kingdom is greatly puzzled by the publication of this false information, which directly contradicts the established, firm and clear policies of the Saudi government regarding relations with the occupying government of Israel and the Kingdom’s prohibition against the use of its territories or airspace for aggression against another nation.”

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